

Speech by the minister of Foreign and European Affairs

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Ministerial Meeting of the Aqaba process

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I would like to thank our Dutch hosts and in particular my dear colleague, Foreign Minister Stef Blok for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank Prime Minister Mark Rutte and His Majesty King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for their inspiring introductory remarks. We all have to thank His Majesty the King for having taken the wise initiative 3 years ago to launch the Aqaba process in order to strengthen international cooperation against violent extremism and terrorism.

Luxembourg fully agrees that terrorism remains one of the main threats to our security. It is clear that more needs to be done to prevent this threat and to tackle the root causes of terrorism. There is no quick answer. We have to design long-term solutions, exchange information and best practices to address this threat together.

Recent attacks in Europe and abroad have shown that the threat of terrorism is not limited to outside groups. It is also present within our societies. As this threat has a tendency to emanate from people that act in an isolated fashion, it is by definition very difficult to detect.

While it is important to guarantee a sound legal basis and provide the necessary tools to relevant national authorities, we should be cautious not to introduce exaggerated surveillance mechanisms. We need to find the right balance and to preserve our fundamental freedoms, principles and values. We have to be careful not to end up in a society in which all citizens are *de facto* suspects. In today's context, we should reject in particular the simplistic equation made by populists, who tend to see in every refugee and in every migrant a potential terrorist; and we should all work together, at the United Nations, in the framework of the UN global compact on refugees and the UN global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, to implement multilateral solutions.

Luxembourg has comprehensive legislation and active policies in place to strengthen the prevention-side of the fight against terrorism. We regard education and integration as effective and necessary tools to counter radical extremist ideologies.

In this regard, I would like to highlight a specific measure taken by Luxembourg last year: we have established a national center against radicalization called respect.lu. This center shares

both information on the process of radicalization and best practices for the handling of radicalization tendencies.

The target group of this initiative is the close environment of a person that runs the risk of becoming radicalized: family members, friends and school personnel. This center is operated by a team mixing various psychosocial professions. There is strong cooperation with law enforcement agencies.

Given the cross-cutting and cross-border nature of the terrorism threat, cooperation between national authorities and international cooperation are vital. We need enhanced cooperation, including between intelligence agencies at the European and international levels.

The fight against terrorism takes also place online, where terrorist groups spread their propaganda. After our successes in fighting Daesh on the battlefield, the fight must continue in the digital space.

Luxembourg is actively engaged in the current discussions at EU-level aiming at removing online terrorist propaganda before it can reach a wider audience. This has to be done, however, without limiting the fundamental rights and freedoms of our citizens. Again, we have to strike the right balance.

Regarding the root causes of terrorism, the discussion note distributed by the Netherlands identifies the main factors: poor economic perspectives, governance and democracy deficits, as well as corruption and the lack of ensuring basic human rights. I want to be very clear: we cannot win the fight against terrorism if we do not tackle these problems!

Luxembourg is doing its best to help, including by investing 1% of our gross national income (GNI) in official development assistance (ODA). We are very active on the humanitarian front, also by supporting demining activities, for instance in Iraq. We attach great importance to mine action, which we believe is a prerequisite for any socio-economic development in post-conflict regions. In the absence of such a development, we leave fertile ground for extremist ideologies, which capitalize on the despair of the local communities.

No country can counter the terrorist ideology alone. The international community must work together in a spirit of effective and principled multilateralism.